

REMARKS

The Office Action of January 26, 2006 has been received and its contents carefully considered.

Claims 1-23 are all the claims pending in the application, prior to the present amendment.

The Examiner has indicated that claim 2 contains allowable subject matter.

The Examiner sets forth five rejections of various claims over prior art. The five rejections are as follows.

Claims 1, 3, 7, 8 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by WO 00/58536 to Nishimura et al.

Claims 1 and 3-4 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as anticipated by JP 2002-146634 to Morita et al.

Claim 5 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over WO 00/58536 to Nishimura et al.

Claim 6 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over WO 00/58536 to Nishimura et al.

Claims 5, 7 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over JP 2002-146634 to Morita et al.

In response to these rejections, applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 2 and have canceled claim 2. In addition, applicants have amended a number of the dependent claims to delete their reference to canceled claim 2.

In view of the above amendments, applicants submit that each of the above rejections have been overcome and, accordingly, request withdrawal of the above rejections.

In addition, applicants request that the withdrawn claims be rejoined and allowed in the present application, since each of the withdrawn claims depend from claim 1, which should now be allowed. Applicants have amended a number of the withdrawn claims so that they no longer depend from canceled claim 2, and ultimately depend from amended claim 1.

Applicants note that the cited JP '634 is discussed in the present specification in paragraph [17] at page 7. In addition, JP '634 correspond to U.S. Patent 6,565,971. Applicants are filing concurrently herewith an Information Disclosure Statement to cite this U. S. Patent.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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WASHINGTON OFFICE

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CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: April 26, 2006


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